

*By
cond-* producing only those documents whose URL is compatible with the access level of the identification code of the person.

Remarks

In the above referenced Office action, Claims 1-8 and 11-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the patent to Schloss (U.S. Patent No. 5,706,507). Additionally, dependent claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Schloss ('507) patent. Lastly, dependent claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Schloss ('507) patent in view of the patent to Kirsch (U.S. Patent No. 5,751,956). Applicant has made amendments to the claims, as noted below, that are intended to address the three grounds of rejection noted above.

Applicant has amended the independent claims 1, 4 and 13 in order to differentiate between the present invention and the invention disclosed in the Schloss patent. The present invention is an electronic document retrieval system and method for collection of information distributed over a network having documents stored in a web site or document servers in which an access control list relates user identification to documents to which a user has access. The document server only forwards on to the user those documents to which the user is authorized to view. The invention disclosed in the Schloss patent is a system and method for controlling access to data located on a content server in which an advisory server rates the content of data downloaded from a content server and sends a classification rating back to a client. The client thereafter displays or does not display the web page according to the classification rating based on the client's selected preferences.

A major difference between the present invention and the invention of the Schloss patent is in

the location where the screening of documents and the determination of whether or not to display a document takes place. In the Schloss patent, this screening of documents and determination of whether to display the document is carried out by the client, i.e. the server where the query takes place. In Schloss, each time that a web page is downloaded from a content server to the client, prior to display, the client sends a request signal to the advisory server asking that it advise the client on the content of the web page. The advisory server rates the page and sends a classification back to the client. A decision is then made at the client whether to deactivate the advisory request or to continue to receive and decode advisory requests. The client receives and decodes the characterization data transmitted from the advisory server and then the client decides whether to inhibit loading of the web page based on the content of the characterization data. (See Abstract, Figs. 3a and 3b, and Col. 5, line 24 to Col. 6, line 6 of the Schloss patent.)

By contrast, in the present invention, the process of screening the documents and determining what documents should be displayed is done by the web server (or document server) in the web site. In the present invention, the user at the query server (the client) enters his or her user identification along with the query to be searched. The search engine at the query server receives the question and interprets the query operators to determine the number of hits responsive to the question. Each hit is associated with a document, in electronic form, located at a particular server by means of a pointer, known as a URL. However, before the hits are returned to the user, the hits are "screened" by determining from the web server whether the user has access using an access control list associated with the web server. The list associates user identification with URLs to which the user may have access. The web server returns documents for which the access level of the user

is compatible and the search engine will not report the presence of the documents for which the access level is insufficient.

Applicant has amended the independent claims 1, 4 and 13 to more precisely point out this distinction between the present invention and the prior art. Claim 1, as amended, specifies that the documents found in a search are screened by the web servers. Claim 4, as amended, specifies the step of "reviewing all URLs by the document servers after the search is executed using an access control list associated with each document server to check whether each URL is compatible with the access level of the identification code of the person executing the query." In Claim 13, an additional step of "determining by one of the document servers whether each URL is compatible with the access level of the identification code of the person" was included. In both Claims 4 and 13, the document server is claimed to be part of the web site, the term "document server" being used interchangeably with "web server".

These amendments to the independent claims distinguishes these claims from the invention disclosed in the Schloss patent. Additionally, the claims, as amended would not be obvious in view of the Schloss patent. In the present invention, the system is designed so that only authorized users have access to the documents in the web site. Thus, the control of information is from the web site/web server side of the communication since it is the operators of the web site who want to control the flow of information that is accessed from their web site. In the Schloss patent, the system is designed so that the user on the client side of the communication can control the information that is received at the client server. In Schloss, the operators of the web site would not care whether the client server has access to the documents in their web site and in many cases would want the user to have access. For example, an operator of a pornographic web site, or another type

of web site likely to be blocked by the method of the Schloss patent, would most likely not be too concerned as to which documents were accessed from his or her web site, as many times these types of web site operators try to lure users into accessing the documents from their web sites. The desire for inhibiting the transfer of this type of undesired information, as discussed in the Schloss patent, is initiated on the client side, since it is the user that wants to control the access to these files so as to screen out certain documents that the user finds to be inappropriate. However, in the present invention, the control of the information is initiated by the web site operators on the web server side, because they only want certain authorized users to have access to the information in certain documents in their web site. In the present invention, the user is not trying to block certain types of documents and, in fact, never even sees the documents to which he or she is not supposed to have access.

A person of ordinary skill in the art would not look to the Schloss patent in order to solve the problem of controlling the transmission of documents from a web site to a user in order to prevent users from receiving documents to which they are not supposed to have access. The Schloss patent deals with the opposite problem in which a user is trying to block incoming documents he or she does not want to receive. Because the problems attempted to be solved by the invention are different and because the system and method used to solve the problems are different --the present invention having the steps of verifying the user access and determining whether to transmit the document being conducted at the web site/web server, while the Schloss patent conducts these steps at the client--, the claims of the present invention, as amended, are not obvious in view of the Schloss patent.

In regards to the rejections of dependent claims 9, 10 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), Applicant asserts that now since the independent claims 1, 4, and

13, as amended, would not be obvious over the cited prior art, these dependent claims would also not be obvious in view of the cited prior art. The other reference cited in the Office action, U.S. Patent No. 5,751,956 to Kirsch, mentions using access control with a common gateway interface script (CGI), but the invention is related to a system and method of reliably tracking and redirecting hyper-link references to external server systems and does not relate to the problem of controlling the transmission of documents from a web site to a user, which is the problem solved by the present invention.

Applicant asserts that the amendments to the claims do not include any new matter. In view of the amendments and remarks made herein, Applicant requests reconsideration of the claims. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

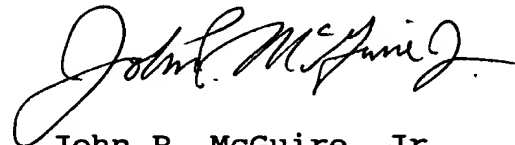
Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Asst. Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231

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